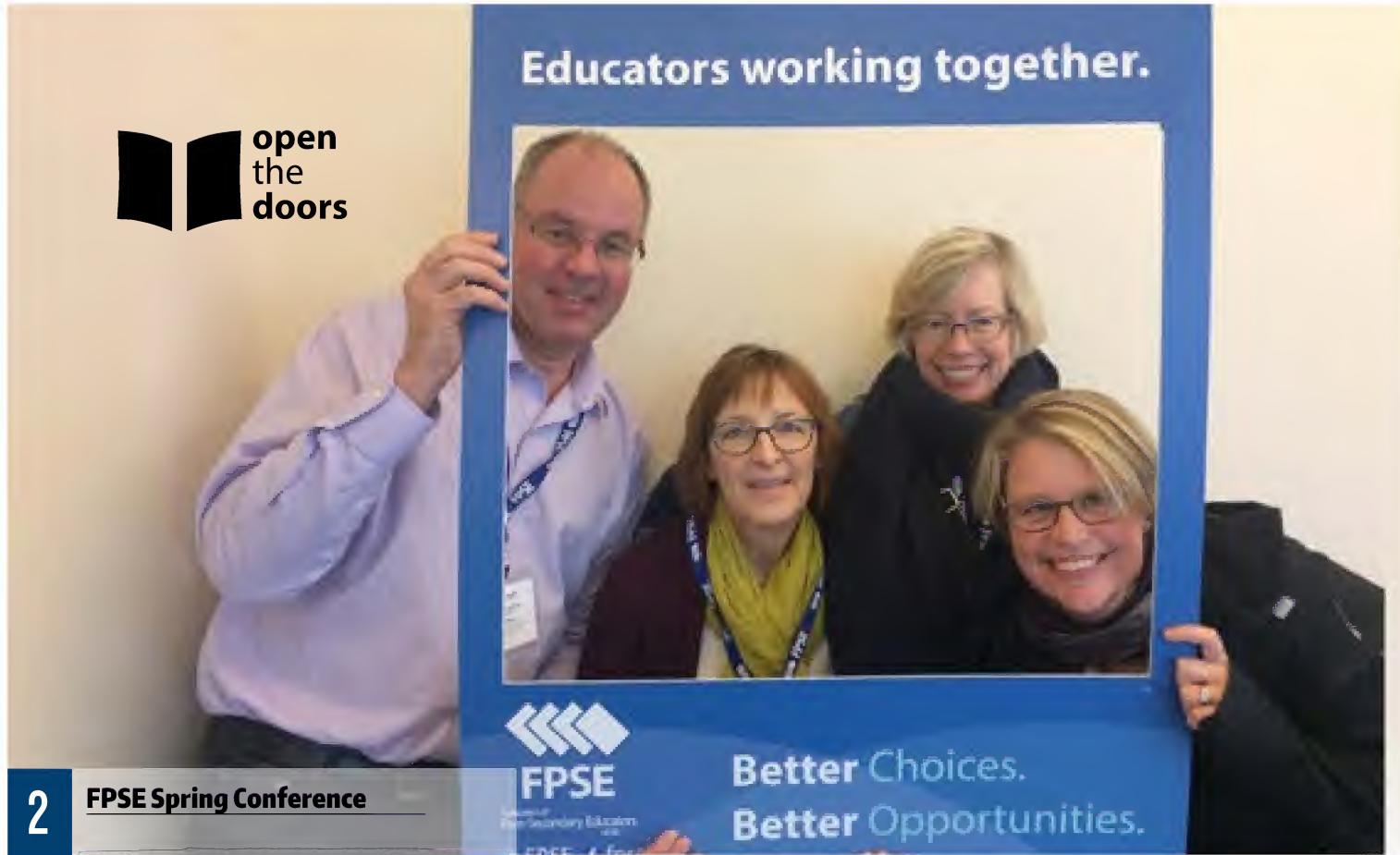


# WORDS & VISION

UFV FACULTY AND STAFF ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Volume 25, number 3

March 2017



2 **FPSE Spring Conference**

open the doors

Educators working together.

FPSE Better Choices. Better Opportunities.



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Women's Rep | **Kulwant Gill**



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Communications Chair | **Lisa Morry**



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Communications Chair | **Lisa Morry**

MARCH 2017



## WORDS & VISION NEWSLETTER

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# Member Engagement & Labour, Management & Governance

**Sean Parkinson** | President

Colleagues,

### Recent Events: Secondary Scales Conference:

On January 28th, Colleen Bell, Christina Neigel and I attended the Federation of Post-Secondary Educators secondary scales conference in Vancouver. The conference included the association presidents, chief bargainers and non-regular representatives from all of FPSE to discuss ways of eliminating so-called "secondary scales." At UFV there are many secondary scales (lab faculty and education advisors, for example) but the conference focused mainly on secondary scales for non-regular or sessional faculty. At UFV, sessionals, and those with limited term appointments, do not have full access to the 'regular' faculty pay scale. Sessionals are compensated on a per-section rate of \$6,263 or \$6,430 depending on if they have less than nine sections of seniority at UFV. Limited term contracts are paid either at Step 1 or Step 2 of the faculty scale, depending on credentials, but have no incremental progression rights.

In the last provincial table negotiations, eight FPSE locals and the Kwantlen Faculty Association successfully negotiated a Letter of Understanding, through which the unions and the Post-Secondary Employers' Association (PSEA) would begin to discuss ways of eliminating these secondary scales prior to the 2019 round of bargaining. Even though the FSA was not part of this provincial table, we believe that if the government does fund elimination of these discriminatory scales for some employees in the system, it's quite possible that that funding could be extended to us and other institutions.

### FPSE Spring Leadership Conference:

On February 18, 2017 Colleen Bell, Vicki Bolan, Kathy Gowridge, Lisa Morry, Christina Neigel and I attended the FPSE spring conference in Vancouver.

The conference consisted of a talk on the economic climate in BC, various workshops including member advocacy, conflict in the workplace (harassment and anti-bullying), infusing aboriginal content in the classroom, precarious academic work and secondary scales, and a session on raising awareness of post-secondary issues in advance of the 2017 election.

### Farmworker Memorial, Golden Tree Monument:

I attended the candlelight vigil at the Golden Tree Monument on March 5, 2017, marking 10 years since the tragic van crash in Abbotsford. Avneet Sidhu spoke on behalf of the three families who lost someone in the accident. Several other speakers from the BC Federation of Labour, Abbotsford community services, and the mayor of Abbotsford spoke, highlighting the need for continued improvements of health and safety conditions for farmworkers.

### March 6th Fundraiser Gala for the Columbia Institute and The Tyee

FPSE President George Davison and Kwantlen Faculty Association president Bob Davis and I attended this event that helps the Columbia Institute and The Tyee bring cutting edge analysis and leading ideas for progressive policy forward.

### United Way Spirit Awards in Abbotsford.

I attended this event of March 7th where UFV won an award in the Leadership category and the FSA won the Labour category.

### Labour Management/Governance

#### An update on policy grievances I have filed: Development allowance adjustment:

The grievance relating to the FSA's position that UFV fails to provide the development allowance adjustment (\$700) for faculty at the top step was set for January

24-26 in Abbotsford. Unfortunately the hearing was adjourned due to illness on UFV's legal team. The hearing will be rescheduled with arbitrator John Kinzie for late fall.

#### Department Head and Summer Semester Issues:

The grievance relating to unilateral cuts of department head release and stipends for summer semester has been settled. Robert Pekes was the mediator in the case and the FSA has received a \$90,000 settlement payment from UFV for withdrawing the grievance.

The FSA is currently looking over a report from UFV providing details about employees who performed department head duties during the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 academic years, the names of their respective departments and the amounts of release time and/or stipend that they received during that time period. We are currently establishing a process for disbursement of the funds to the affected individuals, proportional to the shortfall each experienced in the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 academic years.

#### Denial of release time for elected union official:

The FSA filed a policy grievance when our elected faculty contract administrator was denied release to the FSA to commence her duties June 1, 2016. We settled this grievance in mediation with Stan Lanyon, QC on March 14, 2017.

#### Fashion Design Layoffs

The FSA has filed both policy and individual grievances resulting from layoffs in the Fashion Design area. The FSA believes the affected members have been subject to a faulty layoff process, and, given their tenure has been rendered meaningless by the Employer's actions, they deserve a sensible settlement. We will attempt a mediated settlement with Mark Brown in June and failing resolution, proceed to arbitration in October.

#### Policy Grievance on the Provision of Retroactive Pay:

The FSA filed a policy grievance when the employer refused retro pay to anyone who left UFV employment between April 1, 2015 and October 2, 2016. On December 8, 2016, the FSA received notifica-



From left, Leslie Courchesne, Michelle Vandepol, Jackie Hogan, John Pankratz, Mark Evered, Sean Parkinson, and Kathy Gowridge (far right) at United Way Spirit Awards.

tion from the employer that this grievance had been taken over by PSEA. The matter is now between FPSE and PSEA with an arbitration hearing in May.

#### Grievance for Improper Pay, Type B Faculty with <100% Contracted Workload Fraction:

On February 28, 2017, the FSA filed a policy grievance regarding work being paid on the wrong scale. The grievance relates to Type

"B" faculty members who have a less than 100% contracted workload fraction but who work more than their contracted workload fraction. It is the FSA's position that the portion of work that exceeds the contracted workload fraction up to 100% of regular workload is to be paid at the rate on the faculty salary schedule. Only work that



FPSE President George Daviso

exceeds 100% of regular workload is to be paid at the overload rate.

As an example, a type "B" faculty with a 4/7 contract receives salary, pensionable service and some benefits that are 4/7 what a 100% type "B" faculty member would receive. The FSA position is that if this faculty member teaches more than four sections that he or she receives an additional 1/7 salary, pension and benefit fraction per section until 100% workload fraction is met. Only once the faculty member is at 100% of their pay scale, pensionable service and benefits, can a subsequent teaching section be paid at the overload rate.

If you think you may be affected by this grievance or if you would like to know more please email Sean Parkinson at [sean.parkinson@ufv.ca](mailto:sean.parkinson@ufv.ca)

#### Policy grievances -- From March 3, 2016:

There are two policy grievances the employer refuses to meet on. We are seeking advice from our legal counsel.

1) Failure to evaluate senior administrators: We filed a grievance claiming that some senior administrators have not been subject to either the formative or summative evaluations required in Article 12.15 of the Collective Agreement.

2) Bargaining unit issues: It is the FSA's position there are UFV employees who aren't paying dues but aren't excluded by the Collective Agreement.

So far we have reached a mediated settlement for both grievances that were scheduled for arbitration. I see this as a positive step. Although it would be nice to sort out all our problems at the informal stage there are times we must show we are willing to go all the way to ensure serious and productive discussions do occur at earlier stages.



## Accountability Problems Under Control

**Michael Maschek** | Secretary Treasurer

The Faculty & Staff Association faces a very common organizational challenge of maintaining financial transparency and accountability. These challenges aren't unique to our association. They require a stewardship of resources that maintains the highest regard for disclosure and compliance with organizational policies. Though these challenges are common, what I find particularly uncommon is the misinterpretation that compliance with policies represents an unfavorable cultural change. As secretary-treasurer, this is particularly worrisome.

The Finance and Administration committee is the standing committee of the Faculty & Staff Association that oversees all spending and brings detailed budgets for approval at the AGM. This committee reports to the executive and its membership is stipulated by our constitution. Members include the secretary-treasurer (chair), the president, and the faculty and staff vice presidents.

In the previous issue of *Words & Vision*, a member of this committee expressed concern regarding its operation. Conveying an interest for transparency, the staff vice president suggested the culture of the F&A committee was contrary to that which is valued by membership and that staff issues had been subjugated by the committee ("Goodbye to Hope, Belonging, and Intellectual Curiosity," December 2016).

The indictment of the article is that the executive, and especially the F&A committee, has changed. In truth, I share this contention. Ultimately, one must assess the effectiveness of the F&A committee against a few pretty straightforward objectives. The committee must work towards aligning our actions pertaining to income and expenditure with the budget approved by membership; the committee must ensure that spending and income activities align with the FSA's policies governing these activities; and the committee must ensure accountability and transparency in all manners pertaining to our finances. It is my opinion that

the F&A committee (and the executive) has had to improve in all of these aspects.

However, as secretary-treasurer, I simply do not accept that enforcing current FSA policy and standards of cost accountability represent unfavourable changes. In this respect, what I find truly disappointing is not just the accusation that accountability represents a detrimental cultural change, but the additional notion that this is somehow related to a faculty-staff division. While the committee does not always arrive upon complete consensus, this does not necessarily imply the actions of the committee fall out of line with members' expectations. The standards for accountability have increased because they had to in order to comply with our own policies and accounting benchmarks. Interpreting the increased emphasis on accountability as a cultural change divergent from member desires is contrary to the fundamental responsibilities with which the F&A committee is endowed.

In light of these concerns, however, I think some context regarding these changes is appropriate, and outlining the circumstances associated with them will form the bulk of this report.

The first indication that there were systemic problems with the F&A and executive committees' ability in evaluating and overseeing the spending of the FSA related to executive compensation. The FSA Revenue and Expenditure Initiatives Policy requires any expenditure initiative outside the existing budget with a value greater than 1% of the previous year's gross revenues to be approved by a membership vote.

During the first executive meeting I attended following my appointment as secretary-treasurer, an expenditure item was on the agenda that would have provided any outgoing president with three course releases during their return to regular duties. This compensation policy was formulated prior to the instatement of new executive

members including the current president.

This initiative would have exceeded this threshold stipulated in the Revenue and Expenditure Initiatives Policy. This was the first meeting of the executive following the AGM, so there was sufficient opportunity to bring this initiative before members for approval. The initiative was later withdrawn when I brought this contradiction to the attention of the executive. The initiative, however, had successfully made its way through both the F&A committee and the executive despite being contrary to one of the key budgetary policies of the FSA. At issue isn't a policy providing an allowance of course releases for outgoing presidents, per se. What represented such an important problem was the circumvention of a policy whose intent is to provide membership both knowledge and oversight of significant expenditure initiatives of the FSA.

The creation of new policies attempting to evade expenditure protocols was not the only indication that problems existed. Upholding existing FSA finance policies was also below standards I believe members would find acceptable. During the first semester serving as secretary-treasurer, it became clear that the FSA was being billed for hours in excess of thresholds for certain positions explicitly established in FSA policy without any prior approval. Little justification was provided for hours associated with meeting preparation and emails during months in which FSA business is typically very light and the executive does not meet. Furthermore, work dedicated to committees not constitutionally sanctioned by the FSA was being billed with no formal reports summarizing this work being supplied to the executive.

The FSA Vacation Entitlement Policy for Executive Members stipulates that in the first 30 days after the annual AGM, executive members that qualify for vacation should propose to the F&A committee a vacation plan for the fiscal year. The F&A committee is to approve these plans and any changes in order to ensure all entitlements are exhausted and that proper coverage for the executive member can be arranged. However, during my transition to secretary-treasurer, I learned that vacation days not utilized by executives were being "paid out." These payouts were a significant expense to the FSA and its membership, costing members \$16,005 in the 2014/15 fiscal year. When, on behalf of the F&A committee, I began

requiring vacation plans to prevent such payouts, my requirement to accord with our own policy was interpreted by some as a cultural change. Given the existence of prior payouts and the failure to comply with FSA policy, I choose to instead identify this as a success for organizational transparency and accountability.

During the next few months of service to the FSA as secretary-treasurer, other issues of expenditure oversight became apparent. The FSA Credit Card Use Policy permits each fully released executive member a credit card in the FSA's name for business use. This policy provides guidelines on the use of these cards. It became apparent that the justification provided for expenses charged to the cards was inadequate and in some situations interpretation of what constitutes business expenses was far too generous. After consideration of these matters, the FSA required repayment of certain expenses charged to the cards by some executive members. Given the severity of the situation, in order to help prevent future issues pertaining to cost accountability, the F&A committee recalled all credit cards, requesting members with cards secure them with the FSA finance assistant.

Ultimately, the executive and its members must be accountable for our spending in all its forms. Standards for business expenses continues to arise as a difficulty facing the F&A committee. It was made very clear to those concerned that the F&A committee would require a more significant justification for expenses than the simple statement of "member business" or "member issues." The interpretation of these justifications can be far too general and the nature of the expenses' necessity cannot be evaluated on these statements alone. Despite these assertions, the F&A committee continues to struggle with issues surrounding executive expenses. As secretary-treasurer, and on behalf of the F&A committee, the executive, and membership, we simply require a sufficient justification of expenses that provides accountability and an ability to appropriately allocate the nature of the expense in our budget.

Despite these statements, the F&A committee continues to receive expense claims with little justification over-and-above the claim that they were dealing with "member issues" and to ensure "member representation." This lack of accountability has extended to release of executives from normal

duties for FSA business. As secretary-treasurer, I have been submitted time-sheets requesting executive release that, aside from the total accumulated hours being claimed, are completely blank. Nothing regarding the particular FSA business is noted on the budget transfer request, even after numerous requests and the emphasis placed by the F&A committee on the need for accountability. Where significant discrepancies and anomalies appear associated with these requests, the FSA office simply has no ability to account for the time being expensed

on the implementation of this policy. The policy has never been approved by members at an AGM and no reporting of the status of outstanding loans has ever been provided. The budgetary implications of the policy are not clear to members, as the operation of the policy has been "off book." That is, there is no line item in the annual budget provided members outlining the cost of this policy. As a result, members could not possibly have any idea regarding the financial exposure of the FSA resulting from its implementation. The policy requires our staff to operate



when little or no details regarding its use are provided.

The article criticizing the efforts of the F&A committee does not outline any of these challenges. Instead, it points to two policies in particular as contentious. The first is the FSA Member Loan Policy. Through this policy, the FSA acknowledges its willingness to act as a lender of last resort to help individual members in dire and exceptional temporary financial need. It is understood that the assistance provided by the FSA loans is to meet exigent and temporary, not on-going, financial needs. This policy is widely regarded as valuable amongst executive members of the FSA, but in its current form is problematic.

There are no explicit financial limits placed

as collection officers when repayment of these loans does not occur smoothly. What constitutes exceptional and dire needs has been interpreted with significant variance in the past and no guidance has been provided by membership regarding the appropriate reach of the policy. Even provided guidance on these standards, assessing particular individuals' situations against them is extremely difficult. For these reasons, the executive has voted to suspend the policy until these problems can be resolved. The executive has since contradicted its own decision and issued loans based on the policy despite its decision to suspend it. Moving forward, as the steward of UFV resources

**Continued page 20 ►**



## What's Kim Nickel Up To?

Kim Nickel | Faculty Contract Administrator

The purpose of this submission is threefold. First, I want to remind members of how they can contact me. Second, I want to acknowledge Laura Chomiak (staff contract administrator) for her leadership and commitment to members and her kindness to me. Third, I want the FSA membership to get an idea of what a day in the life of a contract administrator looks like. So, in describing a day in the life, I include information from my FSA, contract administrator executive reports. The information I include is vetted to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the members supported. So, the information does not include ongoing grievance details, as they are sensitive and require privacy as Laura and I face the Employer to achieve a remedy. I will end my submission by letting the membership know that I fully intend to run for re-election in April.

Before I begin my submission's three-part purpose, I want to say that when I started as the faculty contract administrator in July 2016, my plan was to make the rounds, introduce myself to staff, faculty, and sessional instructors, and meet the membership where they work. Unfortunately, early in my term a complex harassment investigation, involving multiple FSA members consumed my time. Although the fallout associated with that investigation is still ongoing, I continue to remain busy responding to Collective Agreement (CA) violations, new investigations, discipline, workload concerns, and sick leave requests.

So, I am rarely in my office; rather, I am meeting with members who need remedies to complex problems. I am also regularly meeting with the Employer to "make whole" harmed members who have had their CA rights violated.

If you don't see me in my office (which is room number A203A, in building A; located across from the boardroom in Criminology) it's because I am attending to member concerns, consulting with the Federation of Post Secondary Educators (FPSE) regarding grievance submissions, meeting with Laura, or meeting with the Employer to address CA concerns.

If you need to discuss how the FSA can achieve a remedy to a violation of the CA, or if you need support related to a sick leave requests, or if you need general/informal FSA advice about your bargained rights, please contact me at UFV local 5353, cell number 778-808-3087, or via email at [kim.nickel@ufv.ca](mailto:kim.nickel@ufv.ca). Laura Chomiak can also be reached at 604-854-4593 or email [laura.chomiak@ufv.ca](mailto:laura.chomiak@ufv.ca). If you need to schedule an appointment you can call, email, or

even take a look at my Outlook calendar, as it's kept up-to-date. If you send a meeting request to either Laura or me, please request the meeting as "PRIVATE" (to protect your privacy/reason for meeting). For urgent matters, call us. Ultimately, I encourage members who need advice, help, or support to contact either Laura, our FSA stewards, or myself.

Now for my second point, Laura has proven to be a powerful mentor. Her generosity of spirit was evident from the start of my term. She has spent many (off duty) hours getting me up to speed on our CA, member rights, and member concerns. She has willingly shared her resources related to labour law and grievance submissions with me. Together, we have established an effective tandem team approach when facing the Employer — similar to a "good cop/bad cop" scenario which has been effective to ensure we are not out-gunned by the Employer. Related to the "good/bad" cop metaphor...I just recently found out that some employees have nicknamed her the "velvet hammer," which is fitting because, on one hand she is polite, professional, patient, and well spoken, while on the other hand Laura is smart, strategic, keenly aware of our CA, member rights, and able to "hammer" the Employer, if need be.

Extending the metaphor, I've been described by some employees as fearless and feisty. Like Laura, I am comfortable standing up for member rights and able to have difficult, candid, and pointed conversations with every exempt Employer representative. I enthusiastically represent members and strongly believe that member issues are my issues. Together, Laura and I represent staff, faculty, and sessional instructors seamlessly because the issues facing harmed members are the same for each employee group, regardless of rank, title, or position. By working together, Laura and I have submitted multiple grievances, saved people their jobs, and resolved workload issues. Laura has extensive union experience, and like other tough union women that continue to inspire me (like my Mom, who was active in the solidarity movement, and Lesley Burke-O'Flynn at FPSE), Laura is transparent, fair, and has allowed me to form my own opinions. Thanks Laura...I appreciate your efforts and commitment to our members

So, how do Laura and I spend our time? The following outlines just some of the many challenges affecting our members as well as some of the union activities and training that we have been involved in. Although heavily vetted, my hope is that members get a glimpse at





what it means to be an FSA contract administrator.

#### **Harassment/Bullying and Policy 18-Related Investigations**

Laura and I worked closely and over several days and for several hours with a member accused of Policy 18 violations. Our support included reviewing the member's statement regarding the allegations, preparing the member for the investigation interview, responding to the member's many questions and concerns. This experience was a difficult one for the member and negatively affected the member's personal life. Throughout this process we stayed in contact, worked closely with FPSE and kept Sean Parkinson updated.

Laura and I continue to represent members who have been disciplined as a result of Policy 18 harassment/bullying investigations. If you have question regarding Policy 18 (that may involve difficult disruptive students, challenging workplace dynamics, or interpersonal difficulties) please call or email us.

With regards to difficult and disruptive students, Laura and I have also spoken to faculty, sessional instructors, and staff members (at our various campuses) regarding appropriate workplace safety responses and how difficult students can be supported and managed. I have joined and continue to attend multiple meetings with both the Chilliwack and Abbotsford Occupational Health and Safety committees and will participate in training (April, 2017) related to responding to difficult students in an effort to support FSA members. If you are struggling with Policy 18-related challenges I encourage you to contact Laura and me.

#### **Grievances**

Laura and I have resolved various grievances at Step 1, Step 2, and Step 3. Grievances are escalated after attempts at informal resolution meetings fail. Resolutions to grievances, at the various steps, are made in consultation with FPSE.

#### **Right to Union Representation and the Employer's Right to Manage**

Laura and I continue to support members, struggling to cope with various CA violations, including questionable workload expectations. The Employer calls meetings with members over these and other CA issues. Concerned members feel pressure to meet, anticipate discipline, and request that Laura and I attend. Every time this happens, Laura and I work with members to ensure they understand their rights and what they can expect from the FSA. Further, we impress upon the Employer the need for members to exercise their union right to representation.

Coupled with the right to representation is the Employer's right to manage the workforce. As such, members must meet with the Employer, if requested, to avoid allegations of insubordination. In some cases, the Employer communicates to the member that union representation is not permitted. Unfortunately, when members' rights to representation are limited, employees feel unnecessarily unsupported. For now, we continue to definitively advance membership rights to union representation to the Employer.

If you are called into a meeting with the Employer be sure to contact Laura and me before you go. You cannot refuse to meet but we need to meet with you before so you understand your rights.

#### **Sessional Instructor Course Load Allocation**

Laura and I have worked closely with sessional instructor members wrongly denied courses. Although prepared to take the issue to grievance, Laura and I have worked closely with the members and the Employer to resolve the wrongdoing at an informal stage.

#### **Short Term Disability (STD) Long Term Disability (LTD)**

Laura and I have spent considerable time working with members requesting/requiring leave while also supporting members currently on either STD or LTD. If you require information regarding an

**Continued page 22 ►**





# Understanding the Benefits of Informal Resolutions

**Laura Chomiak** | Staff Contract Administrator

Why would working through an 'informal resolution' get you labeled as management friendly? It's an interesting perception. For our union brothers and sisters who have never had to go through the grievance procedure, Article 7 of our Collective Agreement outlines the grievance process. Article 7.1 gives the definition of a grievance, but the first step in the process falls under article '7.2 Informal Resolution' which states:

(a) Every effort shall be made to resolve problems through informal channels before using the formal process. The affected employee will request a meeting with the appropriate Supervisor in an attempt to discuss and resolve the problem before a grievance is initiated. The Area Steward or appropriate Contract Administrator of the Association may attend the meeting at the request of either the affected employee or the Supervisor.

(b) Any informal resolution of a problem shall be consistent with this Agreement. If the Association is of the opinion that a problem has been informally resolved in a manner inconsistent with the terms of this Agreement, then the Association may grieve the resolution.

Following Article 7.2 of this process is important to ensure our members well-being

is put at the forefront of the discussion, and to ensure the least amount of stress and disruption to the affected member. It is unfortunate that I have witnessed firsthand, over the past few years, past and present FSA executive brothers and sisters being singled out by what I consider disrespectful comments for following Article 7.2 of our Collective Agreement. History is being rewritten and personal perceptions of how a situation should have been handled are being described as working against the FSA. Keep in mind the disparaging comments made were, what I would consider, a personal attack rather than a professional opinion, and in many cases these comments were made without knowing all the facts; which they are likely not privy to, due to confidentiality. I am referring to historical situations that have affected both staff and faculty that have been addressed and resolved informally to the benefit of the harmed member. Over the last while, I have been fortunate to have worked alongside Randy Kelley and Kim Nickel. These past and current union executive members saw the benefit of working together to resolve problems through the informal channel as both staff and faculty have a lot of the same issues and concerns, when it comes to members under investigation, disability leave, ac-

commodations, bumping, letters of expectation, discipline letters, or suspensions. It's disappointing that there are those few who view this as "sweeping things under the carpet" when it comes to negotiating with management on the union's behalf. I can say without a doubt if you speak to those hundreds or thousands of members over the years whose issues or concerns have been settled through the informal process, they would not say their situation was handled by sweeping things under the carpet or by their union representatives bowing to the demands of management.

As you're reading, we are all entitled to our own professional opinion and those opinions allow us to examine and challenge situations to ensure our membership is well represented. But, in my opinion those challenges should not include disparaging or degrading remarks, or what may be viewed as 'throwing a member under the bus' by singling out a member. This is a fine line between collegial discussion and a difference of opinion and what may fall under our 'Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment Prevention — Policy 18.'

It's disappointing that some members feel that working with management so that we can understand both sides of the issue and work towards the best resolution



for the betterment of our membership is being characterized as "management friendly." Looking and being willing to hear both sides of the situation, standing firm on what our resolutions need to be and ensuring the best member outcome is essential in working through this informal resolution process. It's important to remember that if the informal process fails -We Grieve!

It is important that our membership understands the grievance process (Article 7) when resolving day-to-day issues or extensive long-term investigations. If you are hearing contradictory comments know that your contract administrators have only your best interest at heart. There is no personal agenda, and all our members are treated equally. If you hear otherwise I encourage you to bring those comments and concerns forward to Kim Nickel or me so we can address them right away.

As member issues are our issues, I really encourage you to read Kim Nickel's article which give a small glimpse of what the day in the life of a contact administrator looks like. It gives a clear account of the type of work that we are doing, how well we work together for our membership and our dedication when standing up to management for your rights.

Kim Nickel is putting her name forward for re-election for the faculty contract administrator position. Working alongside Kim and seeing firsthand the committed work she is doing on your behalf, I can say without a doubt that I fully support Kim and will be campaigning on her behalf as she runs for re-election. Over Kim's term we have worked seamlessly to represent staff and faculty on numerous issues. Kim's professional criminology background brings a great perspective when working through member's issues and concerns. Kim's enthusiasm for this work has resulted in us saving member's jobs, obtaining very fair settlements, ensuring member's rights are not violated and that our CA, policies, and procedures are upheld with the member's individual circumstances at the forefront. Kim has no issue going head-to-head with management either through the informal resolution process or taking an issue through the grievance process. I fully support Kim for re-election to the faculty contract administrator position and ask that you join me in having Kim re-elected.

I want to acknowledge Connie Cyrull for her years of service to the membership and the FSA. Connie is stepping down as the FSA staff VP. Her strong lobby for recognition of staff rights and the ongoing

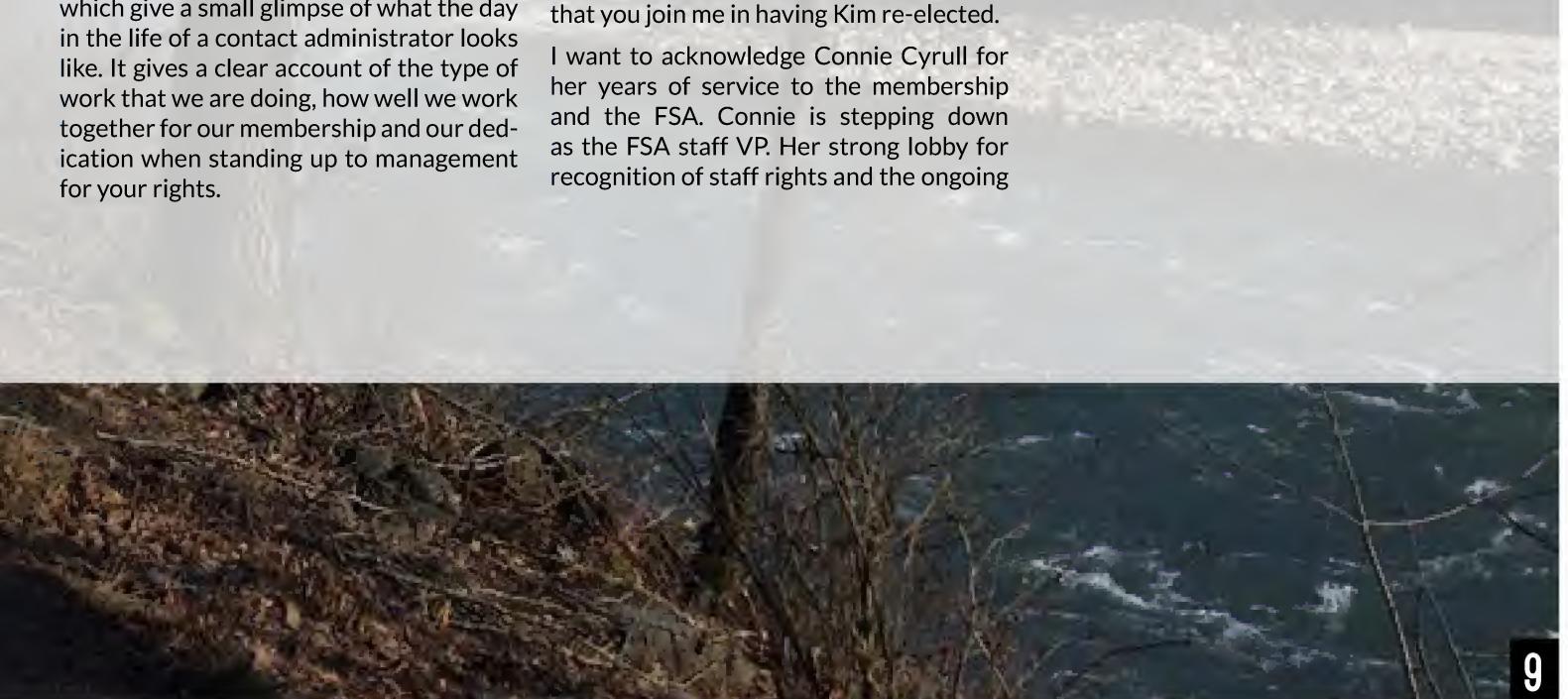
issue of equality has been invaluable.

I would also like to acknowledge Lisa Morry, the FSA Communications chair for all her hard work on the executive ensuring our communications to our membership are clear and transparent, as well as being a voice for staff concerns. I'm hoping Lisa will continue her position by putting her name forward for re-election.

Thank you Connie and Lisa for all your support serving our membership through your time on the FSA, your dedication to the staff cookie and coffee chats and ensuring that issues are brought forward.

I would also like to thank our past and current staff stewards for all their assistance in bringing member's concerns forward and for observing our SACs to ensure process is followed.

If there is anything that I or your staff stewards, or staff VP can do to assist you, please email or phone us.





**Sven van  
de Wetering** | Agreements  
Chair

## A simple calculation

The other day, while I was preaching to my students about the necessity of doing work outside of class time, I made a simple calculation with profound consequences. We ask our students to put in two or three hours of course work outside of class for every hour spent in the classroom. What would happen if we demanded the same of ourselves as faculty members?

The assumption that we should do this appears reasonable. If I do one hour of preparation for every hour of class time, and also do one hour of grading for every class hour, I'm already up to nine hours of total work per week per three-credit course. Add on one hour for my office hour, and it's ten hours per course. Of course, few students show up for office hours any more, but I figure I do spend about an hour a week per course reading and answering their emails, so that does put me up to ten hours per three-credit course.

For many of us, a full load is seven courses (and for some others, it is more). These courses are often divided up into a semester of four courses and a semester of three courses. If my calculation is correct, one is working 40 hours a week in the four-course semester, more than full time, before one has even shown up to a department meeting, performed any other service work, or done a lick of work in research or scholarly activity.

Of course there are ways around this. One can skimp on preparation, for example by teaching multiple sections of the same course, or by recycling old course notes and praying both that one's memory is perfect and that there have been no major developments in the field since the last time the notes were updated. One can also skimp on grading. If one assigns very little written work and leans heavily on multiple-choice tests for assessments, the load can be

greatly reduced.

I must confess that I have on occasion resorted to each of the above-mentioned strategies and gotten away with doing so. Nobody complained, but all strategies except the multiple sections one, left me with the nagging feeling that I was betraying my students, that I was not contributing fully to our mission to offer the best undergraduate education in Canada (TBUEIC). The multiple section strategy does not have this same problem, but it only works if one teaches in a department like mine (psychology), where a large number of sections of the same course are offered every semester.

### Consequences of this calculation

If individual faculty members are highly conscientious, are dedicated to helping UFV offer TBUEIC, and do not have the option of offering multiple sections of the same course, then they face a serious set of problems. What about service? What about research and/or scholarly activity? What about quality of life? Something has to give, but none of the options is appealing.

In terms of service, one cannot skimp too far. If one does not at least attend department meetings and sit on one or two departmental committees, one is falling below the minimum levels of service expected of faculty members at UFV. Not only is performing a very low level of service likely to attract the negative attention of one's supervisors, but it is also likely to make things sticky with one's own colleagues within the department. I suppose that if people keep their service activities really low, they can avoid encountering their colleagues altogether, but this is not an attractive solution, especially since I specified that the individuals in question are conscientious. I would also like to argue that a substantially higher level of service may be desirable. I have

spent the last three years being a department head and going to a lot of committee meetings, and this experience has taught me one thing: the people who go to a lot of committee meetings rule the world, or at least the university. Conversely, cutting service back to the bare minimum is the royal road to disempowerment.

Skimping on research and scholarly activity is also an unattractive option. Most of us, while in graduate school, were given to understand that doing a lot of research was the only route to status, prestige, and even basic respectability as an academic. We here in our regional, special-purpose, teaching-intensive university have had to accept that we are at a disadvantage in this regard, and may have to scale back our research ambitions. Nevertheless, the dream of scholarly prominence dies hard, quite aside from the fact that scholarship tends to renew one's enthusiasm for the field, which is an important component of teaching excellence. And aside from all this, scholarship is expected of us by the powers that be. Cutting back on research and scholarship is not an attractive option, either.

In light of all this, our hypothetical conscientious UFV faculty members, who work hard at offering seven different courses a year, sit on multiple committees at both the department and university level, and perform significant scholarly work throughout the year, not just during the designated PD period, are probably on the hook for 60-70 hours of work a week. They work evenings and weekends. They finish their workdays in a state of near exhaustion, and then must make the time to commute, shop, and cook, all before they finally get a chance to interact with their spouses, offspring, and miscellaneous significant others, usually over a meal, while very fatigued. Quality of life and quality of relationships go down the toilet. On top of



that, my personal opinion is that this also has a negative impact on our ability to offer TBUEIC. Despite all that has happened since the 1960s, university professors are still, to some extent, role models for their students. Unless a fair proportion of us have families with whom we have reasonably healthy relationships, we perpetuate the message that there is a tradeoff between family and career. Since well over half our students are female, this is really not a stereotype we want to be reinforcing.

### Ways out

Some of the most obvious solutions to this problem are non-starters. Reducing our teaching load from seven to six courses would be wonderful, but is probably not a serious option given current fiscal realities. Another non-option is for faculty to choose to be less conscientious, thus violating the premise used in the discussion above. If they don't care much about the outcome, faculty can cut back their teaching work quite substantially. Certainly I have been known to ramp down the degree to which I care about my work, just as a survival strategy. Maybe other people do likewise. But it seems to me that this is not the road that leads us to TBUEIC, which, despite my facetious abbreviation, is something I really believe in.

Graders are one option I would like to see explored. Most departments offer a lot of first-year courses. Much of the grading of the work done by first-year students entails nothing more complex than correction of spelling, grammar, punctuation, and usage. To the extent that grading of content does also occur, it occurs at a very basic level, because the level of mastery expected of first-year students is still pretty low. Why not hire promising fourth-year students to take some of this load off of faculty? Since doing this sort of work looks great on a CV, many of our more talented and ambitious

fourth-year students would be willing to do this work for a low rate of pay, perhaps within the framework of our existing work-study program or something similar. Thus, this could be a relatively cheap option.

Needless to say, it would also be a messy option. What would the relationship of these markers be with the FSA? How could we distribute graders equitably among different faculty? Many service roles, such as chairing committees, have had releases associated with them cut or eliminated. Could graders serve as a partial substitute for such releases? What about as a supplement to releases for a research option or the like? Resolving questions like these will take a lot of time and energy, and some people will undoubtedly be frustrated by the ultimate result, but I think it may be worth exploring, given the problems with the status quo.

Another option I would love to see explored is reducing the number of committees at UFV. Earlier in this column I wrote that those who attend committee meetings rule the world. The proliferation of committees at UFV means that the number of committee meetings one has to attend to have a significant influence within the UFV community is on the rise.

The latest addition to our suite of committees that I have heard of (I may have missed some) is one that makes determinations on student applications for late withdrawals. This was previously done by the instructors teaching the course from which withdrawal was sought. These instructors usually knew a fair amount about the circumstances and did not need to deliberate a great deal or do much research in order to come to an informed decision. Now we have a committee, whose membership is difficult for an outsider to ascertain, and whose members will in most cases have no first-hand knowledge of the case. In order to make a determination,

they will either have to do considerable research and discussion, or else they will have to resign themselves to making many ill-informed decisions. I have to assume that the presumed benefit of this new procedure is greater uniformity in decision making, but the cost is substantial: some people's workloads increase appreciably, and faculty lose some autonomy in dealing with their own students.

Bureaucracies tend to grow unless explicit and fairly robust measures are undertaken to cause them to shrink. Worse, this growth results in an increase not just in the number of full-time administrators, but also in the number of administrative tasks that other members of the organization have to undertake. Working at shrinking our bureaucracy might bring big benefits, not only for faculty well-being and for the health of our budget, but also for the quality of the education received by our students. Remember them?

I would like to end with an apology. In my last column I erroneously made the following claim: "18 staff members in HR were given exempt status for reasons of confidentiality a few years ago." This information turns out to be incorrect. In fact, only nine of the 18 staff members in HR have exempt status. I am sorry for this error.

Regrettably, I am still not knowledgeable enough about staff issues to write about them authoritatively, as the above apology illustrates. I therefore restrict myself, once again, to writing about faculty issues in this column.



# The Rise of Collegial Governance and the Role of the FSA

**Christina Neigel** | Faculty Vice President

There are few workplaces that are governed by their own employees, making universities extremely special places to work. However, very few who work in universities receive any direct education on governance and it is often assumed that the processes of governance are learned through practice. This is a particularly challenging situation for UFV because many began their work here in a time where collegial governance was not legislated as it is now under the University Act – an act which has substantially transformed UFV’s decision-making process. Others are new in their careers or have come from other workplaces. In any case, it is possible that there are still many of us that find the nuances of collegial governance complex and, sometimes, elusive. Yet, it is important and necessary to persist in gaining understanding because the stakes are high. Our engagement, at all levels, is essential to ensuring that the institution moves in a direction that genuinely supports our community. It is not only our privilege, it is our responsibility to participate in governance thoughtfully and with care. Consequently, I find myself continually filling my own knowledge gaps in order to make informed contributions. The Confederation of University Faculty Associations’ (CUFA) recent conference on university governance provided an excellent opportunity to learn more about the global and local challenges of being a member of the academy.<sup>1</sup> Presenters from various Canadian universities all underscored one key message: our labour is intrinsically tied to governance. There are forces, including that of corporatization, that frustrate the governance process, prompting important questions about who constitutes the “university community” and how this community can steward the care of the institution as its “academic citizens.”

<sup>1</sup> Confederation of University Faculty Associations, BC. “University Governance in the 21st Century, March 3-4, 2017

The manner in which universities govern themselves is highly contextual and begins with provincial legislation. Universities in British Columbia and Alberta, for example, are unique because their governments treat universities as entities that are *within* government financial processes, introducing a level of government interference that is not mirrored elsewhere in Canada. Difference is further exacerbated between institutions because of their histories, including several in BC coming from community college roots. My intent here is to highlight some key aspects of governance to a) emphasize the importance of UFV service work, b) empower FSA members to further develop their collegial governance skills, and c) relate issues of governance to the need for an FSA operational review.

## The Board

Because there is no uniform method for university governance, it can be extremely challenging to understand the precise manner in which power flows within university communities. This creates confusion and even unease among faculty who may wish to question problems of process at various committee levels. Under the BC University Act, UFV is instructed to use a bicameral system of governance. Within this system, there is a Senate and a Board of Governors. According to the Act, “the management, administration and control of the property, revenue, business and affairs of the university are vested in the board.” As an example, the board is responsible to set employee “salaries or remuneration, and to define their duties and their tenure of office or employment.” This means that it is the board, in conjunction with the FSA, who signs our Collective Agreement, and it is our board and the FSA that must establish the conditions of our employment – including evaluation. For faculty, this is clearly articulated in

article 13.4 of our current agreement:

For faculty employees, evaluation criteria and procedures will be established by the Employer in consultation with the employees in the appropriate area and the Standing Committee on Faculty Evaluations.”

(Note, however, there is yet to be a Standing Committee.) For staff, evaluation is framed a little differently in article 13.3:

For staff employees, evaluation criteria and procedures will be established by the Employer in consultation with employees in the appropriate area and the Joint Professional Development committee.

It is a common misunderstanding to assume that management negotiates our Collective Agreement and working conditions. While managers are invited to attend board meetings to support the work of the board, university managers are not part of the board itself. Ideally, those elected and appointed to the board use UFV administration to assist in making informed operational decisions and should be invited to attend board meetings as necessary. Elected representatives like faculty, staff, and students shoulder a significant responsibility in communicating the interests of the UFV community – the good and the uncomfortable.

## The Senate

As the other branch of the bicameral system, the University Act states that “the senate of a special purpose, teaching university must advise the board, and the board must seek advice from the senate, on the development of educational policy.” Education policy includes specific matters like adjudication procedures for student appeals, priorities for implementing new programs, and setting qualifications for faculty members. This branch of UFV governance is where the standards for rank and tenure have been established, for example. It is also the space in which programs are officially created, modified, and discontinued. Obviously, such decisions require a great deal of consultation and examination at departmental and faculty council levels so that senate representatives have the most comprehensive information possible for decision-making.

Theresa Shanahan, author of the *Handbook of Canadian Higher Education Law* (2016), argues that it is the duty of the university's community of scholars (and their faculty associations) to ensure that our boards are doing what needs to be done to ensure the safe stewardship of the university. This is not easy because the board and the senate co-exist in a fragile balance of power that is easily disrupted. Our contributions require us to ask questions, sometimes difficult ones, and challenge assumptions that may meet with resistance. Our agency is eroded if we fear retaliation or humiliation and we lose our footing if the information we need is absent or inadequate. The outcome can be apathy, low morale, and decision-making that slips into a kind of "autopilot" formality without deep and meaningful debate.

After reviewing minutes from various committees and the board, I see a disturbing

ical for members of the board who require a broad understanding of the university in order to determine its business priorities. In addition to the administration, the academy must support the work of the board. To do this effectively, however, the academy must be engaged. Governing is hard and political work but it is also substantial and meaningful work.

We can fortify our role by taking a number of actions. These include taking more time to review documents in our committee work, supporting one another in asking questions, informally sharing what we learn in our service work with our colleagues, reviewing in camera guidelines and challenging its overuse, and seeking out coalitions with other university stakeholders.

#### The FSA Review

As one of these stakeholders, the FSA is inextricably linked to the university and those who work here. Even though the institution has drastically changed in the last ten years, the FSA's structure has been relatively static. Failure to ratify the 2014-2019 Collective Agreement in the spring of 2015 was a significant indicator that expectations from the FSA membership did not align with the bargaining process and, possibly, the goals of the employer. This event symbolizes UFV's break from its university college structure and the struggles associated with changing governance processes. The FSA must examine how the shifting expectations of what it means to work in a university fit with its own organizational structure, if it is to remain relevant to its membership.

The FSA review is comprised of a number of parts that includes general data collection, a survey of membership, discussions with various stakeholders, and an analysis of operational processes. The review process is led by a series of scope questions that are listed here:

4. How do FSA executive members contribute to the FSA's goals?
5. How does the Collective Agreement work to protect quality education?
6. To what extent is it the role of FSA in defending the rights of students?

We anticipate completing the review in the fall of 2017 and it will encompass a number of recommendations that may result in constitutional, policy, and procedural changes. This review process is unusual because it must incorporate the unique characteristics of our membership and the complicated context of post-secondary organizations in BC. There is no "template" for reviewing unions but the development of scope questions has been immensely helpful in keeping this work focused. By participating in the upcoming review survey, you can inform this process by allowing the FSA executive to "check in" with membership about various FSA activities and priorities. Incorporating the survey with a review of operational decisions and policies enables the FSA to develop clear recommendations that will enable the FSA to adapt to change. It is already clear that the FSA possesses a number of important assets that, when leveraged within a strategic plan, will better support the needs of the membership. Further, the FSA has a critical role in assisting employees to navigate their work within a system of collegial governance. If universities are "communities of scholars" that are supported in their work by other education professionals, it is imperative that we are all empowered to participate in the processes that assist the board in setting its business priorities. This is not to say that our institution is a business in the sense of a private corporation. Indeed, we are members of a very, very special workplace where we have a say in the work that is performed because we are considered its citizens.

## Participate in the FSA Review Survey and enter a draw to win a \$500 cash prize or one of two \$200 prizes

trend of minutes that are becoming increasingly vague. This encompasses a combination of omissions of discussions around motions and an exploitation of in camera sessions. Both of these practices work to conceal the truths about our workplace. As items move through the appropriate approval processes, recorded discussions contextualize decisions. Further, recorded discussions offer insight into past practice in ways that can be critical to addressing issues that arise as the institution evolves. This is particularly crit-

1. How does the FSA fit into the broader context of organized labour in Canadian post-secondary education?
2. Are the structures of the FSA effective and efficient?
3. Does the FSA meet the needs of members?



## 30 Drops Out of the Bucket

**Lisa Morry** | Communications Chair

In his article about workload, my FSA colleague Sven van de Wetering breaks down the actual costs of standard faculty course loads, estimating the toll it takes on family life, quality of student experience, research and scholarship and personal well-being.

Sven says he can't speak for staff. Fair enough. Sven has been doing a wonderful job of writing about how faculty members experience the university. Sven speaks from the perspective of a full-time faculty member, and not that of a sessional instructor, who experiences precarious employment, which can only add to the stress. (In an effort to gain more information about precarious employment, Non-Regular Employees rep Mike Solyom and I will be attending Okanagan College's precarious employment conference in May <https://precariousworkconf.wordpress.com/>).

Like Sven, I can't speak to the experiences of all staff members in the university. I can, however, comment on what I have heard from staff members at our coffee and cookie chats. We hold these meetings to get to know each other, welcome new members, get a picture of how staff members are coping in our institution, how our colleagues feel about workload, stress, work-life balance and to answer any questions they may have. (Two more coffee and cookie chats are coming up May 12 in Abbotsford and May 26 in Chilliwack.)

I get a sense of everything falling apart for some of our colleagues. People are cynical, they are defeated, they don't care anymore. That's not everyone, but it is true of some people.

It would be easy and unfair to blame management, but I'm not going to do that.

Instead, I'm going to talk about Open(ing) the Doors—the Federation of Post-Secondary Education's political awareness campaign. Open the Doors aims to make post-secondary funding an election issue. Through Open the Doors, FPSE has gathered more than 18,000 signatures on education pledges supporting post-secondary education funding. On March 15, FPSE secretary-treasurer Van Steinburg and president George Davison delivered those pledges to Victoria (<https://thetyee.ca/>

<News/2017/03/16/Faculty-Union-Calls-for-Money/>).

I've been out there, along with my FSA colleagues, collecting thousands of signatures from the UFV community as part of that pledge drive. It's not just about the pledges, or the contest that FPSE ran, raising awareness about how students struggle financially to attend post-secondary education.

One of our own, Kinesiology student Calvin Tedesco, won one of the top prizes in that contest--\$4,500, ostensibly for a vacation, but which Calvin said he was putting towards his own student debt and visiting family. To read Calvin's story, see "Education Opens the Doors for UFV Kinesiology Student," *Words & Vision*, December 2016. Calvin was one of the students I and my colleagues spoke with during our Open the Doors events.

Every time I talk with students at one of these Open the Doors events, I ask them if they know that it is the provincial government that decides on funding and legislation for post-secondary education, and which, in fact, is in control of their educational career and opportunities. Virtually all of the students I talk with don't know this. I ask them if they know there's a provincial election coming up in May. Virtually all of them don't know this. I ask them if they vote. Not many do, from what I hear. I ask them if they will vote in this upcoming election. Some hesitatingly say yes. I ask them if they're registered to vote. Mostly, they don't know. I ask them if they know where to vote and how to vote. Again, they mostly don't know. I direct them to the Elections BC website and I wonder why they don't care, but I know they are busy, like we all are, just surviving.

The current government in Victoria is hoping we won't care. They're hoping we'll be distracted by the shiny treats they are currently dangling in front of us in the lead-up to the May 9 vote. Our short memories and apathy are weapons in their arsenal. Our preoccupation with our overstressed lives mean that we don't have much time for paying attention to politics. That's part of the plan. They don't want us to pay attention. They don't want us to look back and see their record on the issues, including post-secondary funding, which has

been cut back consistently by the Liberal government.

The per-student operating grant has been cut 20 per cent since 2001, while tuition revenue has increased by a whopping 400 per cent, moving the cost of education increasingly onto students, many of whom turn to student loans to finance their education, according to FPSE (<http://www.fpse.ca/sites/default/files/inline-files/FPSE%20Position%20Paper%20FINAL%20%20E2%80%93%20September%206,%202016.pdf>). For a complete picture, please read the report in the above link.

This past weekend, I chose to vacuum and wash floors, leaving the rest of the mess for another day. I squeezed in grocery shopping after a visit with my mum after a day of union business. I know it's like that for everyone else as well. It's understandable that we tune into Netflix and drift off for the night. We're tired and we're stressed.

We have to look to the reason our dollars don't go as far as they once did. We have to look to the reasons we don't have time for family, friends and home. We have to look to the reasons we are squeezed at work. It all comes down to politics. In this case, it's provincial politics and we have a chance to make a difference this May.

I can't say I'm optimistic that the NDP will form government, but I will fight as hard as I can for change this election. I attended the FPSE spring conference, the majority of which was focused on electing change in Victoria. I pointed out that three Liberal MLAs were elected from UFV in the last provincial election and I asked why we weren't doing more, such as enlisting everyone who attended the conference to work on local campaigns.

Back home, I'm talking to as many students as I can about the importance of looking at post-secondary funding as an election issue. And I'm helping organize a 30 Drops Out of the Bucket campaign that will see 30 of our students and alumni with the highest student debt receive \$1,000 scholarships each.

30 Drops out of the Bucket is part of the FPSE Open the Doors campaign and the FSA is grateful to the



Do You Have a Student Loan?  
YOU COULD WIN  
**\$1,000<sup>00</sup>**

**30** Drops Out of the Bucket

A Contest to Reduce Student Debt in BC

FPSE executive for approving our campaign. Deadlines are tight. We're doing this quick and dirty, copying our campaign almost word for word from Okanagan College's brilliant effort (<https://30drops.wordpress.com/2016/03/07/oc-students-with-highest-student-debt/>). We were too busy with our own extended bargaining to invent a UFV-specific campaign, but we are doing what we can to make a difference.

If for no other reason than that you care about your students, help us spread the word. Encourage them to enter to win \$1,000 towards their student loans in our 30 Drops Out of the Bucket contest. The contest closes Thursday, April 6, 2017. See our website <http://www.ufv-fsa.ca/fpse/30dropsoutofthebucket> for more information. And if you want a better life for yourselves, your colleagues and your students, encourage your students to vote. Tell them how to register to vote, how to find out where to vote and why it's important.

In solidarity,

Lisa



## Who Owns My Stuff? And Other Things I've Been Up To

**Colleen Bell** | Chief Negotiator

### Custody and Control of Faculty Records

Occasionally, questions arise around who actually owns the course materials and other documents that faculty produce in the course of their work. These questions can arise in situations where materials are made available on a platform such as Blackboard, which makes it relatively easy for someone with the proper administrative rights to copy those materials. They can also arise when circumstances force a last-minute change in instructors for a course, and there is pressure to provide materials to the new instructor. And, they can arise when a member of the public seeks information about the university and its operations through a freedom of information request.

This last example was an agenda item at the January 27 meeting of the FPSE Bargaining Coordination committee. A memo from CAUT, the Canadian Association of University Teachers, provides information on the custody and control of faculty documents and records:

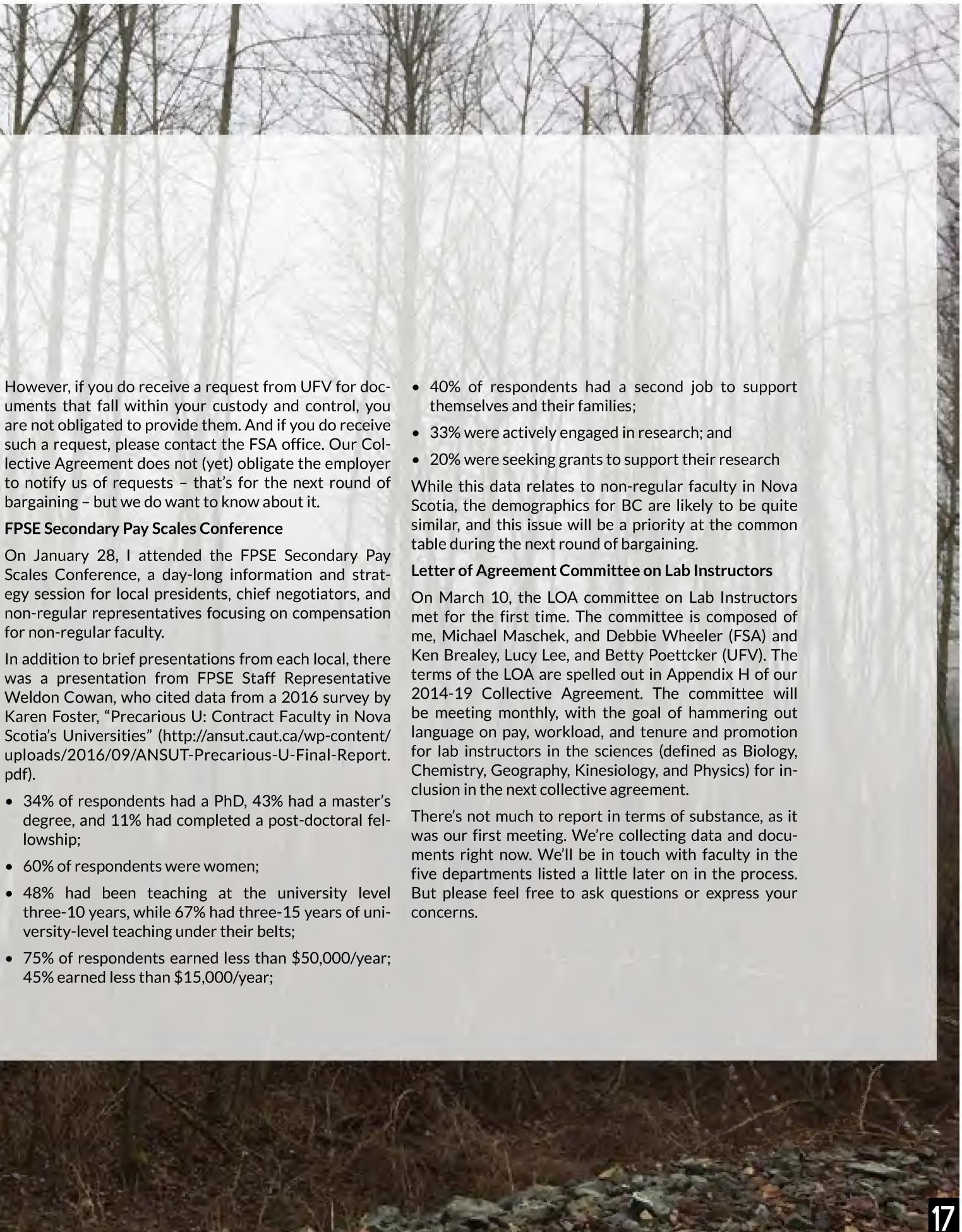
"Unlike in most other workplaces, the great majority of records and documents created and received by academic staff in the course of their employment are, and have always been, in their own custody and control. This applies to letters, notes, post-it notes, emails, telephone messages, notes on the margins of meeting agendas, ... lecture notes, drafts of articles and books, etc. The principal exceptions are records created in and for the fulfillment of an administrative role for the university, e.g., letters and email written or received as a chair or dean

in fulfilling the duties of the position or material that is part of a member's participation in a university committee (but not including the faculty member's notes taken during the meeting)."

Universities have long operated under the principle of academic freedom, and this is the primary reason for this exception. Were it not the case, the CAUT memo states, the employer could potentially have legitimate access to everything work-related, whether stored in a file cabinet in your office or in piles on the desk of your home office, or even on your personal computer or tablet.

This issue has become especially important as universities are being brought under the umbrella of legislation regarding access to information (in BC, it's known as FIPPA, or Freedom of Information and Privacy Act). The CAUT memo cites case law, as well as several examples of inappropriate institutional responses to freedom of information requests, mostly from Ontario. If you're interested in the details, I'll let you read the memo yourself: [http://www.caut.ca/docs/default-source/mailings-2014/14-01-custody-and-control-of-your-members-records-\(2014-01-03\).pdf](http://www.caut.ca/docs/default-source/mailings-2014/14-01-custody-and-control-of-your-members-records-(2014-01-03).pdf)

What about UFV? Do they know about this? That's a little unclear. According to the UFV web site on Access to Information and Protection of Privacy (<http://www.ufv.ca/informationprivacy/>), UFV does reference "public records in the custody and control of the university," but the rest of the site is silent on what, exactly, might fall into this category of public records.



However, if you do receive a request from UFV for documents that fall within your custody and control, you are not obligated to provide them. And if you do receive such a request, please contact the FSA office. Our Collective Agreement does not (yet) obligate the employer to notify us of requests – that's for the next round of bargaining – but we do want to know about it.

#### **FPSE Secondary Pay Scales Conference**

On January 28, I attended the FPSE Secondary Pay Scales Conference, a day-long information and strategy session for local presidents, chief negotiators, and non-regular representatives focusing on compensation for non-regular faculty.

In addition to brief presentations from each local, there was a presentation from FPSE Staff Representative Weldon Cowan, who cited data from a 2016 survey by Karen Foster, "Precarious U: Contract Faculty in Nova Scotia's Universities" (<http://ansut.ca/ut/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/ANSUT-Precarious-U-Final-Report.pdf>).

- 34% of respondents had a PhD, 43% had a master's degree, and 11% had completed a post-doctoral fellowship;
- 60% of respondents were women;
- 48% had been teaching at the university level three-10 years, while 67% had three-15 years of university-level teaching under their belts;
- 75% of respondents earned less than \$50,000/year; 45% earned less than \$15,000/year;

- 40% of respondents had a second job to support themselves and their families;
- 33% were actively engaged in research; and
- 20% were seeking grants to support their research

While this data relates to non-regular faculty in Nova Scotia, the demographics for BC are likely to be quite similar, and this issue will be a priority at the common table during the next round of bargaining.

#### **Letter of Agreement Committee on Lab Instructors**

On March 10, the LOA committee on Lab Instructors met for the first time. The committee is composed of me, Michael Maschek, and Debbie Wheeler (FSA) and Ken Brealey, Lucy Lee, and Betty Poettcker (UFV). The terms of the LOA are spelled out in Appendix H of our 2014-19 Collective Agreement. The committee will be meeting monthly, with the goal of hammering out language on pay, workload, and tenure and promotion for lab instructors in the sciences (defined as Biology, Chemistry, Geography, Kinesiology, and Physics) for inclusion in the next collective agreement.

There's not much to report in terms of substance, as it was our first meeting. We're collecting data and documents right now. We'll be in touch with faculty in the five departments listed a little later on in the process. But please feel free to ask questions or express your concerns.



## #BeBoldForChange

**Kulwant Gill** | FPSE Human Rights & International Solidarity Rep

It has been a busy few months. On November 4/5, 2016, I attended the FPSE Human Rights and International Solidarity committee meeting in Vancouver. Representatives from various locals shared their reports on campus initiatives and events pertaining to human rights issues. One key theme that emerged from this meeting was the impact of tuition on Adult Basic Education (ABE). Vancouver Community College has taken a huge hit in ABE enrollments as students are unable to pay for their upgrading courses. While the Adult Upgrading Grant is available to qualified students, those slightly above the threshold are unable to continue with their educational goals. Underfunding ABE and ESL has also resulted in layoffs at VCC. Adults enrolled in ABE already face additional barriers to accessing basic education. As an advisor for the ABE program at the Abbotsford campus, I know firsthand the importance of education as a means of escaping the cycle of poverty. While other provinces are investing in adult education, our government is cutting funding. Read more at:

<http://www.policynote.ca/adult-education-in-bc-a-canadian-outlier/>

Internationalization was another theme that emerged from this meeting. Due to rising tuition costs and underfunding of post-secondary programs, institutions are relying on international students to fill the funding gap. Is this fair to both our domestic and international students? Are we serving the needs of our international students who pay huge fees to attend our institutions? We discussed some ethical and moral obligations that every institution should comply with to ensure all students get the education they deserve. In turn, we need to ensure our faculty is adequately prepared to teach international students. Faculty needs to have access to professional development opportunities to prepare for teaching international students.

I was fortunate enough to attend a week-long course in Harrison Hot Springs, February 5-10, entitled: Building Psychologically Healthy Workplaces. Topics covered included: stress in the workplace, psychological health, offensive behaviours, prevention, accommodating mental health, and the CSA standard. It seems that workplace stress/illness is increasing as more and more members are

on leave. We need to ask ourselves, "What is happening in our workplaces that is contributing to members being off work?" UFV must take a proactive, rather than a reactive approach to dealing with workplace health and wellness of all members. A psychologically healthy workplace benefits everyone as it leads to decreased sick time, improved employee job satisfaction and engagement, fewer STD/LTD leaves, and hopefully, fewer grievances and human rights complaints.

There is no need for a toxic work environment, yet, I hear from members who are afraid to speak out for fear of retaliation from their superiors. These members are either being micromanaged by their supervisors, and/or treated unfairly. Some are working in areas where colleagues are subjected to constant gossip, or bullying, or increased workloads with no relief on the way. These and many other issues contribute to a toxic workplace, resulting in a feeling of helplessness on the part of affected members. The end result: unnecessary stress and physical/psychological problems.

Be a champion in your workplace by demonstrating appropriate behaviours and call people out when you witness inappropriate behavior. There is no need for you to suffer in silence, or fear retaliation because there are laws and legislation that protect you from unhealthy workplaces. Get in touch with me if you need tips/resources/advice on creating a healthier workplace.

The Human Rights and International Solidarity committee spring meeting/leadership conference was held on February 17/18 in Vancouver. The HRISC committee discussed the financial barriers to access for adult learners. As student debt continues to grow, so is the demand for food banks on campus. Locals need to work together to discuss strategies to mobilize effectively to bring awareness to ABE/ESL declining enrollments as a result of funding cuts by the current government.

On a sad note, we learned that First Nations author and activist, Arthur Manuel passed away. Arthur delivered a talk last year at UFV as part of the HRISC-organized speakers tour on Decolonization, Reconciliation and New Directions.



Thanks to UFV University Relations for the photos

Some recent events sponsored by the FSA Human Rights committee included Full House, a play written by English professor, Rajnish Dhawan, on March 6th; and International Women's Day (IWD), March 8th. Both of these events were highly successful. Check out the Flickr photos from the IWD event: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/152854733@N02/sets/72157678934311132/>

Be sure to mark your calendars for an upcoming RAN (Race and Antiracism Network) event on March 28th to commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The FSA is also a proud sponsor of this event, titled "Committed Citizens Changing the World."

If you have any questions, or issues pertaining to Human Rights initiatives, let's discuss these over coffee. Together, we can make our workplace stronger, and healthier.

# Accountability Problems Under Control



## ◀ Continued from page 5

charged with enforcing financial policies of the FSA, I believe transparency and accountability to members requires bringing policies like this one before them to acquire direction at AGMs.

The second significant policy noted in the article pertains to professional development for executive members relating to labour education. Professional development applications are evaluated by the F&A committee. FSA policy regarding the use of the PD budget states the following: "The committee will ensure that the PD funds are distributed in such a way that no one executive member is disadvantaged by another." The F&A committee received four PD requests from two fully released executive members. These two individuals were requesting to attend the same two events. The expenditure associated with these requests represented about half of the FSA's total annual PD budget. This budget is meant to serve the entire executive of 16 members. The policy does not stipulate priorities over particular executive positions in accessing PD funds. Instead, it acknowledges priorities established annually through the FSA executive retreat. The F&A committee asked each applicant to choose one of the two events; if there was sufficient budget remaining after a call for PD applications from remaining executive members, the second event would be considered.

Respectfully, the Staff-VP and applicants may disagree with the policy itself. However, interpreting the actions of the F&A committee based on the current policy governing these decisions as a failure of the committee is completely unfair. It is not the role of the F&A committee to implement policy on an ad hoc basis. The FSA has established protocol for policy changes. The executive creates policy and the Finance and Administration committee is charged with its implementation. If our PD budget is to favour fully released executive members, then it should be changed. Until then, it is not a fair to associate criticism with a particular policy with a criticism of the F&A committee's imple-

mentation of it.

As part of fostering increased accountability, at the beginning of my term I made all FSA policies publicly available on our website. This disclosure has been an important element of increasing member awareness of our actions and I maintain a personal commitment as treasurer to ensuring members are aware of our financial policies and actions. I believe the actions of the Finance and Administration committee over the past two years have successfully enforced current FSA policies governing financial matters.

However, the FSA should do more than simply disclose policies and abide by them; we should actively seek guidance from members. In order to increase understanding regarding our operation and ensure our financial initiatives align with member aspirations for their association, significant financial policies should be brought before membership for evaluation as part of our AGM. This has not been the norm for the FSA, historically. After looking into the historical minutes, to the best of my knowledge, no policies pertaining to our finances have ever been approved by membership. This step will improve understanding and awareness by members, provide the F&A and Executive committees with guidance on appropriate initiatives in the eyes of membership, increase the legitimacy of our financial policies' implementation, and more effectively provide the legal requirement for financial accountability. In terms of increasing accountability and transparency, this seems like a logical next step I am committed to as secretary-treasurer.

If you have any questions about the FSA policies available on our website, our adherence to these policies, or anything in this report, please do not hesitate to drop me an email or stop by my office.

# Coffee and cookie chats for staff in Chilliwack and Abbotsford



Join non-regular rep Mike Solyom and FSA staff reps who may include Vicki Bolan, Laura Chomiak, Connie Cyrull, Kulwant Gill, Sheila McKay, Lisa Morry and Gayle Noel for coffee and a cookie and an opportunity to ask questions or discuss anything that concerns you.

## **In Abbotsford**

we will be in A203b  
(enter through Crim area)  
Friday, May 12  
from 12 noon to 2 p.m.

## **In Chilliwack**

we will be in A2428  
(on the CEP campus)  
Friday, May 26  
from 12 noon to 2 p.m.

**Come  
by and  
say hello**



# What's Kim Been Up To?



## ◀ Continued from page 7

accommodation, STD, or LTD please contact Laura and me.

### Service to FSA/FPSE

Tanja Rourke, Laura, FPSE, and I planned steward training. Unfortunately, due to poor weather conditions, this training had to be cancelled. The new date, which needs to be confirmed by FPSE (who will be leading the training), is tentatively scheduled for March 24th, 2017.

### LAM/Related Joint UFV/FSA Activities

Laura and I continue to attend Labour and Management committee meetings and will continue to use this forum to advance member issues.

Laura and I are working with HR staff to co-plan Selection Advisory committee (SAC) observer training. The training had to be cancelled due to poor weather and has been rescheduled for March 17th, 2017.

### Training/Union Outreach

I have participated in grievance/representation training at FPSE.

Laura and I also participated in the 22nd Annual BC Labour Law Review. This two-day event provided us with current trends in labour law developments affecting unions and employers. The panelists were expert union and employer labour lawyers as well as eminent arbitrators. These practicing experts focused on arbitration, privacy, matching discipline to misconduct, accommodation, and what determines if a grievance is allowed or denied. Beyond learning valuable skills relevant to both grievances and arbitration, we also had the unique opportunity to speak one-on-one with union and employer labour lawyers and arbitrators. These conversations were candid and allowed us to understand our employer's position on specific issues (ie harassment and the right to union representation). The event provided us with valuable take-away resources that we have already drawn upon in preparing grievances and participating in step 1-3 meetings.

The BC Labour Law Review was relevant and cutting edge. By integrating both employer and union labour law experts, Laura and I were able to understand both the strengths and weaknesses of each position as it related to discipline, accommodation, grievances, harassment, and bullying.

I also participated in my first BC Federation of Labour Convention. I learned much about the importance of working together and appreciated the time I got to spend with Irene Lanzinger, the President of the BC Federation of Labour.

I continue to participate in FPSE's Contract Administration Review committee (CARC). CARC has proved to be a valuable opportunity to share experiences with union colleagues from across the region while gaining insights into both formal and informal resolutions.

Now for my campaign pitch, I am honoured to represent FSA members and strongly believe that member issues are my issues. I am fearless and feisty and enthusiastically represent all members. My first eight months have proved to be an incredible opportunity to solve complex problems that often do not have clear solutions. I am relentless and resilient in my ability to represent members. My education and professional background have positioned me well to be an effective faculty contract administrator. I never back down from an opportunity to have CA violations redressed.

My FSA executive experience has laser-beam focused my desire to run for re-election. I am even more committed to representing members and have the experience and training to have violations of our CA remedied. I am poised and strategic in high-stakes situations, and never take issues personally. This work is not for the faint of heart, is often thankless, and requires a keen ability to remain tenacious, show empathy, and above all, maintain a high level of professionalism. I have honed these skills and I passionately encourage you to support me and vote for me (if there is an election) for the faculty contract administrator position.

Sincerely and in solidarity,

Kim Nickel

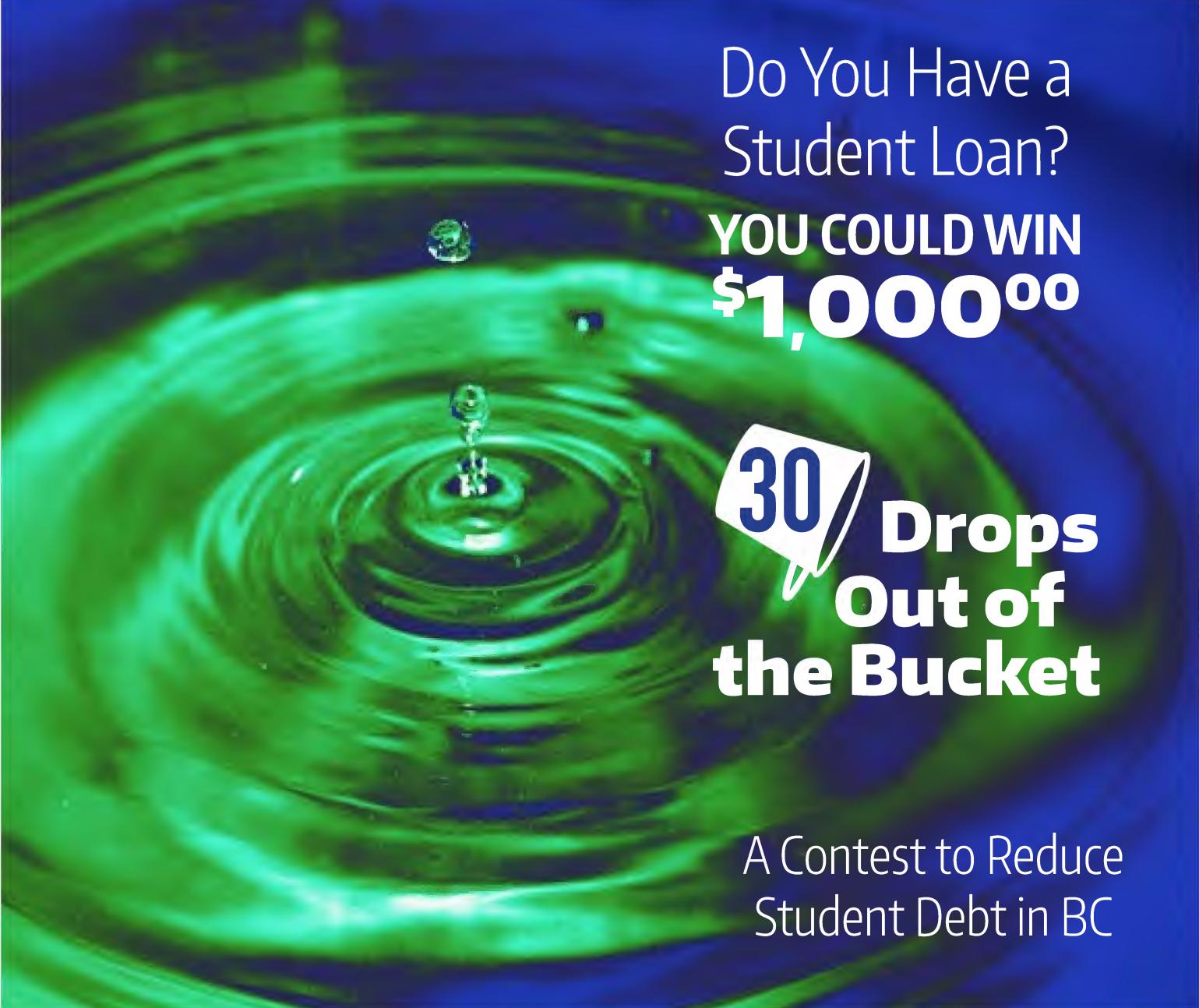
FSA

Faculty Contract Administrator

UFV Local 5353

Kim.Nickel@ufv.ca

778-808-3087



Do You Have a  
Student Loan?  
**YOU COULD WIN  
\$1,000<sup>00</sup>**

**30** **Drops**  
**Out of**  
**the Bucket**

A Contest to Reduce  
Student Debt in BC

**Enter to Win  
TODAY**



Student debt in BC is out of control. UFV's Faculty and Staff Association wants to award 30 students or alumni \$1,000 each to help pay off their student debt. For contest rules and application forms, go to:

<http://www.ufv-fsa.ca/fpse/30dropsoutofthebucket>

Apply by 4 p.m. Thursday, April 6, 2017



## Goodbye and Welcome to a New Future

**Connie** | Staff  
**Cyrull** | Vice President

I have enjoyed the time I have spent in looking after member issues, but will not be seeking re-election to the position of vice president-staff.

I encourage you younger and more resilient members to take control of your union as it is only with your involvement you will have an association to be really proud of.

There are many issues this present executive need to resolve and with the up-coming elections only you will be able to determine who will best represent you with management and in looking after your issues.

For me, I will finish those things that are important, but I will always be there to listen to you. My whole reason for being on the executive was to make sure I could do my part in helping your work environment and issues come to a positive resolution. In order to strengthen our work place, we need to strengthen our Collective Agreement and our relationships

with each other. Respect your contract administrators as they are the ones who are on the front lines looking after your issues.

I will openly declare my support behind Kim Nickel's bid for re-election and will be happy to talk to anyone interested in knowing how effective she is.

Also, I will continue to support the fine work Laura Chomiak has provided to the staff of UFV. Both Laura and Kim use the toolkit provided in the Collective Agreement to the best of their abilities.

In solidarity,

Connie Cyrull

## FSA CONTACTS 2016- 2017

<b>Executive</b>		<b>Local</b>		<b>Faculty Stewards</b>		<b>Local</b>
President	Sean Parkinson	4584		Faculty of Arts		4814
Faculty Vice-President	Christina Neigel	4558		Faculty of Applied & Technical Studies		5426
Staff Vice-President	Connie Cyrull	4214		Academic Support Faculty		4396
Faculty Contract Administrator	Kim Nickel	5353		Faculty of Access & Continuing Education	Julia Dodge	2553
Staff Contract Administrator	Laura Chomiak	4593		Faculty of Science	Debbie Wheeler	8198
Chief Negotiator	Colleen Bell	4396		Faculty of Professional Studies	Bob McAuliffe	4334
Secretary/Treasurer	Michael Maschek	4135		Faculty of Health Sciences	Vacant	
Communications Chair	Lisa Morry	2471		<b>Staff Stewards</b>		
Agreements Chair	Sven van de Wetering	4457		Staff - Abbotsford & Mission	Adam Bodnar	6319
JCAC Co-Chair	Gayle Noel	4093		Staff - CEP / TTC	Vacant	
JPDC Co-Chair	Vicki Bolan	4543		Staff - Member at Large	Heather Compeau	4096
OH&S Co-Chair	Noham Weinberg	4493		Staff - Member at Large	Nicole Kungle	4075
Social Committee Chair	Sheila McKay	6338		Staff - Member at Large	Kulwant Gill	4578
FPSE Rep. Status of Women	Teresa Piper	4054	<b>Office Administration</b>		<b>Local</b>	
FPSE Rep. Human Rights	Kulwant Gill	4578		Member Services & Procedures	Tanja Rourke	4530
FPSE Rep. Non-Regular Employees	Mike Solyom	4811		Finance	Harman Dhaliwal	4475